

[Mrs. Frank (Grandma) Leonard]

[??] Schoolteacher. [?] Received 1/11/39 [acc?] 1/11/39 S-241-Rock DUP

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

NAME OF WORKER E. E. Holm ADDRESS Mariaville, Nebraska

DATE December 28, '38 SUBJECT

1. Name and address of informant

Mrs. Frank (grandma) Leonard, Bassett, Nebraska

2. Date and time of interview

December 28 '38 Wednesday afternoon

3. Place of interview

In her home at Bassett, Nebr.

4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant

Mrs. Fred [Hutton?], Bassett, Nebraska and others, Mrs. C.P. Wiltse Mariaville, Nebr.

5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you

Mrs. E. E. Holm

6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

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A fair sized house, a block off of main street, somewhat weather beaten, rooms were comfortable, much space was occupied with keepsakes, and relics. An invalid sister lives with her, also a son. Mrs Leonard though eighty years old is very energetic, somewhat nervous, give one the impression of always being in a hurry. Her mental faculties are clear.
C15 - 2/27/41 - Nebraska

FORM B Personal History of Informant

NAME OF WORKER E. E. Holm ADDRESS Mariaville, Nebraska

DATE 12/28/38 SUBJECT

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Mrs. Frank (grandma) Leonard, Bassett, Nebr.

1. Ancestry English

2. Place and date of birth [Yankeegan?], Illinois, March 1858.

3. Family

seven children, a number of grandchildren, Mr. Leonard died ten years ago.

4. Place lived in, with dates

Ill. Chicago, Neligh '80-'81, north of Mariaville from '82 for about [tenyears?] lived in Bassett since early nineties.

5. Education, with dates

Common school education

6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates

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housewife and housekeeping main interest

7. Special skills and interests

some musical and vocal ability

8. Community and religious activities

sing solos at funerals

9. Description of informant

average size, gray haired, walks with alert sep step

10. Other points gained in interview

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

NAME OF WORKER E. E. Holm ADDRESS Mariaville, Nebraska

DATE 12/28/38 SUBJECT

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Mrs. Frank (grandma) Leonard, Bassett, Nebr.

Grandma Leonard came, with her husband, a medical student, from Chicago in '80 to Oakdale, Nebr. then the railroad terminus of the Northwestern railraod. They spent a year at Neliegh, Nebr. where Mr. Leonard's mother was operating a [milinery?] shop, the first in Neliegh. In March 1881 the Leonard's came to what later became Rock County, to the Niobrara River, near Carns. They came by rail to Atkinson and there engaged a wagon and team of mules for \$15.00 to transport them and a supply of groceries to their new home. Only a few settlers were here then. While the Turpins and the Huttons returned to Iowa for more of their families the leonard's took care of their places and other belongings. Mrs. Leonard recalls the times were very hard. She learned to cook in the

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fireplace with a Dutch oven. Their diet consisted of biscuits and cornbread, and meat from game which abounded. on the island formed by the river nearby. Deer, antelope, wild turkeys, and prairie chickens were plentiful. They would catch the game in [?] fowls in traps, sell them frozen to nearest store for shipment to eastern markets, and thus get a little cash. Grandma Leonard recalls that she ground her corn for cornbread in the coffee mill, and used the siftings to make "coffee".

In the meantime Mr. Leonard's mother took a claim on the present site of Woodlake, in Cherry County. Grandma Leonard jokingly referred to the "wood" on the lake as consisting of two scrubby cottonwoods. But trees were probably scarce enough to warrant the later naming the of the town, Woodlake.

[Grandma Leonard and her husband took a homestead north of Mariaville. She says that the dreadfully hard times are painful memories, but "We were so happy when we were all together." She remembers [seeing?] alocal schoolmaster. Henry Douglas, who later became a successful lawyer, cross the prairie to his school bare-footed.?)

Funerals were sad, usually no minister was available, but a service was held anyway. Someone would offer a prayer, and she recalls having sung at funerals of several children. Her favorite solo for such occassions was a hymn.

"Over the Tide" Don't mourn for me mother, As though in the dark tomb For I shall fear its dark shadows or gloom not And I shall not fear though the river be wide For Jesus will carry me over the tide.

When her own little boy died, they buried him right on their homestead.

A fine neighbor, John Turpin, was needlessly shot to death in an altercation over some stock he had shut up because it was running in his wheat. The owner came and took the stock away without consulting Turpin. The neighbor carried a gun as he always did in hopes of seeing game. Each mistaking the intention of the other, shots were exchanged

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and Turpin died a few days afterwards. No legal proceedings followed this entirely unnecessary tragedy. Turpin had befriended this same neighbor by giving him food supplies when he was in need.

Mrs. Leonard recalls having seen as many as 50 yoke of oxen hauling freight to Ft. Niobrara. Her was on the so called Black Hills trail, not far from the Niobrara Crossing. (Must have been the year that they took [care?] of the Turpin and Hutton properties.)

She had one of the best times she recalls when she accompanied her husband in the covered wagon when he went to work on the railroad which was being under construction between Atkinson and Long Pine. Perhaps the assurance of a cash income accounts for this, but she says it certainly was a happy time for her. While the regular cook was gone Mrs. Leonard cooked for the camp.

By 1883 it was less lonely, as there were settlers on every [160?] acres. [?], literaries, and spelling bees were the prevalent mode of entertainment. dances were held, but the Leonards did not dance.

They moved to Basset about 1888. Mr. Leonard became county commissioner and later county treasurer for a number of terms.